

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

April 14, 2009

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

The Fuel, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2007, the 2008 Farm Bill and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provide many opportunities for Texas agriculture, especially in the realm of developing renewable energy from less competitive feedstocks.

Texas agriculture recognizes cellulosic biomass as a potential energy resource and a catalyst for economic development in rural Texas. Rapid, but thoughtful, implementation of the bioenergy provisions of the federal renewable energy programs is vital to develop the industry. Therefore, I request your efforts to accelerate implementation by partnering with the Texas Department of Agriculture to administer and distribute funding.

As you know, Texas is the second largest agricultural state in the nation, a leader in traditional energy resources, and the largest biodiesel producer in the United States. We have a great deal of technical expertise and practical experience, including significant energy infrastructure investment. Because of these assets, Texas is well prepared to maximize federal funding in developing infrastructure for the renewable energy industry.

I hope you will feel free to contact me if Texas resources may assist USDA in any aspect of policy or program development. I would also like to extend an invitation to you to visit Texas and tour the many research and commercial bioenergy technologies in which we are investing.

Sincerely yours,


Todd Staples

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